



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: October 13, 1999

Release No: 99-85

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SBA ADMINISTRATOR HONORED BY THE FLAX TRUST/AMERICA

NEW YORK, NY – Today, Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), will receive the Ninth Annual Flax Trust Award at the Flax Trust Ball in New York. The award is in recognition of Alvarez' commitment to economic development and for her efforts in facilitating joint ventures between small business owners in the U.S. and Ireland.

In receiving the Flax Trust Award, Administrator Alvarez will join past honorees such as President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, President of the AFL-CIO John Sweeney, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Tom Foley, and Senator Patrick Leahy, who have also received the Flax Trust Award for outstanding contributions.

The Flax Trust is a registered charity, formed in Belfast in 1977, and in 1982, Flax Trust America was formed. The organization's goal is 'reconciliation of a divided community through economic and social development, bringing peace to both communities, one person and one job at a time.'

Administrator Alvarez visited Northern Ireland in December 1998 where she delivered a special seminar on entrepreneurial development, and also addressed the Vital Voices Conference, where she pledged to continue to support the peace process through economic development opportunities.

While in Belfast, Administrator Alvarez told her audience, "The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Northern Ireland and the same dreams and issues and challenges we face in the U.S. are faced in Northern Ireland by small business owners. We can learn a lot from each other."

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